We claim:

1   1. A computer implemented method for maintaining information provided by a user,

2 comprising:

3   encoding session information in a first web page, wherein at least a portion of the

4   session information is not visible to the user;

5   sending the first web page over a network to a web browser of the user;

6   receiving updated session information from the user via the network;

7   decoding the updated session information; and

8   using the decoded session information to create a second web page.

1   2. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the information provided by

2 the user enables the configuring of a configurable product.

1   3. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the session information is

2 placed in a hidden form field.

1   4. The computer implemented method of claim 1, further comprising determining from

2 the decoded session information a state of the user's web session.

1   5. The computer implemented method of claim 1, further comprising determining from

2 the decoded session information all information provided by the user in a web session.

1   6. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the step of encoding the

2 session information includes encoding in the first web page all information provided by the user

3 at the time of encoding.

1   7. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the decoded session

2 information is encoded into the second web page.

1   8. The computer implemented method of claim 7, wherein information encoded into the

2   second web page includes all relevant session information provided by the user at the time of

3   encoding.

1   9. The computer implemented method of claim 1, further comprising using the updated

2   session information to determine a configuration result.

1   10. The computer implemented method of claim 9, further comprising using the

2   configuration result to generate the second web page.

1   11. A computer implemented method for configuring a configurable product for a user,

2   comprising:

3   encoding session information in a first web page, wherein at least a portion of the

                 session information is not visible to the user;

4

5   sending the first web page over a network to a web browser of a user;

6   receiving updated session information from the user via the network;

7   decoding the updated session information; and

8   using the decoded session information to create a second web page.

1   12. The computer implemented method of claim 11, wherein the session information is

2   placed in a hidden form field.

1   13. The computer implemented method of claim 11, further comprising determining

2   from the decoded session information a state of the user's web session.

1   14. The computer implemented method of claim 11, further comprising determining

2   from the decoded session information all information provided by the user in a web session.

1   15. The computer implemented method of claim 11, wherein the step of encoding the

2   session information includes encoding in the first web page all information provided by the user

3   at the time of encoding.

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1   16.   The computer implemented method of claim 11, wherein the decoded session
2   information is encoded into the second web page.

1   17.   The computer implemented method of claim 16, wherein information encoded into
2   the second web page includes all relevant session information provided by the user at the time of
3   encoding.

1   18.   The computer implemented method of claim 11, further comprising using the
2   updated session information to determine a configuration result.

1   19.   The computer implemented method of claim 18, further comprising using the
2   configuration result to generate the second web page.

20.   A computer program product for maintaining information provided by a user,
comprising:

      3   program code for encoding session information in a first web page, wherein at least a
      4   portion of the session information is not visible to the user;
      5   program code for sending the first web page over a network to a web browser of the
      6   user;
      7   program code for receiving updated session information from the user via the
      8   network;
      9   program code for decoding the updated session information; and
     10   program code for using the decoded session information to create a second web page.

1   21.   The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the information provided by the
2   user enables the configuring of a configurable product.

1   22.   The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the session information is
2   placed in a hidden form field.

1   23. The computer program product of claim 20, further comprising program code for

2   determining from the decoded session information a state of the user's web session.

1   24. The computer program product of claim 20, further comprising program code for

2   determining from the decoded session information all information provided by the user in a web

3   session.

1   25. The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the program code for encoding

2   the session information includes program code for encoding in the first web page all information

3   provided by the user at the time of encoding.

1   26. The computer program product of claim 20, wherein the decoded session information

2   is encoded into the second web page.

1   27. The computer program product of claim 26, wherein information encoded into the

2   second web page includes all relevant session information provided by the user at the time of

3   encoding.

1   28. The computer program product of claim 20, further comprising program code for

2   using the updated session information to determine a configuration result.

1   29. The computer program product of claim 28, further comprising program code for

2   using the configuration result to generate the second web page.

1   30. A computer implemented method for configuring a configurable product for a user,

2   comprising:

3   receiving at an application server session information from the user via a network;

4   determining at the application server a configuration result based on the session

5   information;

6   encoding the configuration result and the session information in a first web page;

7   sending the first web page via the network to a web browser of the user;

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8   deleting the session information and configuration result from the application server;

9   receiving at the application server updated session information from the user via the

10   network;

11   determining at the application server an updated configuration result based on the

12   updated session information;

13   encoding the updated configuration result and updated session information in a

14   second web page;

15   sending the second web page via the network to the web browser of the user; and

16   deleting the updated session information and updated configuration result from the

17   application server.

1   31. The computer implemented method of claim 30, wherein the configuration result and

2   session information are placed in hidden form fields.

1   32. The computer implemented method of claim 30, wherein the updated configuration

2   result and updated session information are placed in hidden form fields.

1   33. The computer implemented method of claim 30, further comprising determining

2   from the session information all information provided by the user in a web session.

1   34. A system for configuring a configurable product, comprising:

2   a user coupled to a network, the user including a web browser, memory and a display;

3   and

4   a server coupled to the network, the server enabled to encode session information

5   received from the user into a web page and to send the web page to the user

6   for storage of the session information.